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SUBJECT: LIBERIA: MEDIA REACTION: A NEW BEGINNING SPEECH

11. SUMMARY: On June 4, 2009, the Public Diplomacy Section delivered copies of President Obama's speech to Mosques and media houses throughout Monrovia. Liberians watched the speech live on CNN and BBC in cafes and restaurants. Radio stations replayed the speech several times that day. Newspapers printed photos and highlights from the speech. Post expects that news coverage will continue for a week to come. The Vice President of the Interfaith Council of Liberia Sheikh Kafumba Konneh paid tribute to the speech on June 5 at the ground-breaking ceremony for the New Embassy Compound in Monrovia. The message to bridge the gap between faiths in order to ensure peaceful and prosperous future is particularly resonant in post-conflict Liberia. END SUMMARY.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

12. The Public Diplomacy Section delivered copies of President Obama's speech and engaged with Liberian Muslims at the Interfaith Council, Muslim Council, Muslim Women Association, and the top Mosques in Monrovia. At each Mosque, a significant number of those who had gathered for afternoon prayers said they had watched the speech on CNN as it was being relayed by a local television service provider. Generally, Liberian Muslims at the various mosques said they thought it was an historic speech that broadly laid the foundation for a new relationship between America and Muslims around the world, not only the Middle East.

-- Imam Musa Keita of the Newport Street Mosque said, "It was a very fantastic speech and we will share copies with all of our members."

-- A member of the Randall Street Mosque, Sekou Dukuly said, "I noted with appreciation President Obama's knowledge of the Koran."

-- The Vice President of the Interfaith Council of Liberia Sheikh Kafumba Konneh was invited, along with a Christian and a Traditional religious leader, to provide a prayer over the ground-breaking of the New Embassy Compound (NEC) in Monrovia, Liberia. The NEC site served as a refugee camp during the years of conflict in Liberia and the ground breaking doubled as a memorial for the lives lost. In his remarks, Sheikh Konneh specifically mentioned President Obama's New Beginning Speech and noted that Liberians needed to implement the same respect and equality at home.

MEDIA COVERAGE

13. RADIO: Several local radio stations, including independent Star radio, Radio Veritas (owned by the Catholic Church of Liberia and a VOA affiliate) ran stories, carrying quotes from the President's speech on June 4th and 5th.

14. TELEVISION: Power TV, a local television station whose broadcast covers Monrovia and its suburbs relayed the President's speech live from CNN for its viewers.

15. PRINT: President Obama's speech in Cairo, Egypt, Thursday received extensive coverage in Liberian newspapers.

-- The leading daily "the Daily Observer" (circulation over 5,000 copies) ran a story on page two under the headline "Obama Reaches Out to Muslim World." The paper wrote, "US President Barack Obama has said the cycle of suspicion and discord between the United

States and the Muslim World must end." The Observer also devoted an entire page in its June 5th edition to gauging international reaction to the President's speech.

-- The New Vision (daily, circulation of more than 2,500) on June 5 ran a front-page story under the caption "US and Muslims to Forge New partnership-As Obama Wants new Beginning-Confronts Violent Extremism." The paper also included a list of complementary quotes from the Quran.

-- The Liberia Journal (daily, circulation of less than 2,000) ran a front-page story on June 5 under the headline "To Muslim World Obama Reaches Out".

-- The Public Agenda, (daily, critical of the government, circulation: 2,500) on June 5 ran a story under the caption "Obama Reaches Out to Muslim World".

-- The Inquirer (daily, circulation of 5,000 copies) on June 5 ran the President speech verbatim on page two.

THOMAS-GREENFIELD